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Oregon Senate Votes to Support Families with Disabled Children

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon Senate passed [Senate Bill 91 B](#), a measure establishing a Department of Human Services (DHS) program to compensate parents who provide attendant care services to their minor child with very high medical or behavioral needs.

“This issue arose when parents began asking for an extension of a federal program that compensated them for providing care during the COVID-19 pandemic. We learned that the provider workforce for children with disabilities was in steep decline and that there were better outcomes when care was provided by parents who are trained and qualified. Senate Bill 91 is a first step solution for parents who are best equipped to provide love and care for their children,” **said Senate Republican Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend)**.

Parents of minors with disabilities were not allowed to be paid as their child’s caregiver until the pandemic hit, when the Office of Disabilities Services applied for and received a federal waiver allowing it during a public health emergency. The program proved to be a huge success. 89% of families surveyed reported that their children’s overall health improved. 90.3% said their child’s physical health improved, and 89.2% said their child’s mental health improved.

“Senate Bill 91 is a solution to providing required health care services and support for children with disabilities who are legally entitled to such services in accordance with federal law. Many families with disabled children are unable to find qualified home health care providers who can service the home health care needs of these children. By allocating these health care dollars that a child is otherwise entitled to for home health services to the parents, it creates a mechanism to provide cost effective, clinically necessary, and affordable health care needed for the daily living needs of these children with qualified disabilities. As a parent of a disabled child, I know firsthand how important it is to support this effort. However, \$3 million dollars is not enough to support families fairly

and adequately, and the legislature has an obligation to do more to support their health care needs,” **said Senator Cedric Hayden (R-Fall Creek)**.

Senate Bill 91 will now be considered by the Oregon House of Representatives.

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